



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: JULY 5, 2006

ITEM NUMBER: _____

**SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT SCREENING GPS-06-02 FOR TRIANGLE SQUARE
1870 HARBOR BOULEVARD/1875 NEWPORT BOULEVARD**

DATE: JUNE 21, 2006

FROM: DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT/PLANNING DIVISION

PRESENTATION BY: DONALD LAMM, AICP, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER- DEV. SVS. DIRECTOR

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: KIMBERLY BRANDT (714) 754-5604

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept or reject the General Plan Amendment Screening request to consider the addition of residential uses on a portion of Triangle Square located at 1870 Harbor Boulevard/1875 Newport Boulevard.

BACKGROUND:

Request

The applicant is proposing to add residential uses to a portion of Triangle Square. The 2000 General Plan designates the 4.45-acre site as Commercial Center, and it is presently developed with a 3-story, 185,000 square-foot building that includes retail shops, theaters, and restaurants. Triangle Square is located in the City's Downtown Redevelopment Project Area.

See Figures 1 and 2 for a Vicinity Map and site photographs.

General Plan Screening Criteria

City Council Policy 500-2 establishes a procedure for processing privately initiated General Plan amendments. This procedure involves a City Council screening of these requests prior to their acceptance for formal processing. The policy includes three criteria for accepting requests and two criteria for rejecting requests. The acceptance criteria are as follows:

1. A General Plan amendment is necessary to resolve inconsistency between the General Plan designation and zoning of a parcel.
2. A General Plan amendment is necessary to provide a uniform land use designation on a single parcel.
3. A General Plan amendment would result in decreased traffic impacts from the property.

The criteria for rejecting an application are as follows:

1. The request applies to a single small lot or a small area, especially if the change would make the property inconsistent with surrounding properties.
2. The property is located in the Redevelopment Area and requires action by the Redevelopment Agency to amend the Redevelopment Plan.

In addition to the above criteria, the policy also states that no request shall be accepted that would increase the overall, citywide development cap. It does, however, allow amendments that would result in development exchanges or transfers to be considered. The policy also acknowledges that these criteria are only guidelines and City Council may accept an application which does not meet the criteria if it finds there are overriding reasons to do so.

ANALYSIS:

The request is to modify Triangle Square by replacing a portion of the existing retail development with residential multi-family units. However, the application did not quantify the amount of retail to be removed nor did it indicate the number of units to be constructed. The request also did not specify the anticipated overall height of the residential units (see Attachment 3).

Staff notes that the Commercial Center land use designation does permit residential land uses as a complementary use at a density of 20 units per acre. Given that Triangle Square is presently developed at a floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.95; it presently exceeds the maximum allowable FAR of 0.35 for this land use designation (Triangle Square was developed prior to the City's adoption of FARs in 1992). Therefore, in order to add residential units to this site, City Council would need to approve a site-specific density/intensity standard for Triangle Square.

In respect to this request's compliance with the City's General Plan screening criteria, it is not required to resolve a General Plan amendment and zoning inconsistency or provide a uniform land use designation on a single parcel. Triangle Square is located in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, but the requested amendment will not require the Redevelopment Agency to amend the Redevelopment Plan. However, the Redevelopment Agency will review the proposed amendment, if Council accepts the request for processing.

Absent a specific amount of retail uses to be converted to residential units and the total number of units to be constructed, staff cannot determine the proposal's traffic impacts. If Council accepts this request for processing, staff would require sufficient detail for a complete traffic analysis that addresses impacts at critical intersections in Triangle Square's vicinity, including intersections along Newport Boulevard.

Triangle Square is surrounded by major streets (Newport Boulevard, Harbor Boulevard, and 19th Street) that contain commercial land uses. However, Triangle Square is visible from Eastside residential areas on both Broadway and Flower Street. As with traffic concerns, staff cannot assess impacts to surrounding residential neighborhoods until more definitive project information is known (for example, total building height). Staff

notes that the General Plan limits overall building height to four stories south of the I-405 freeway. Although the applicant did not specify a building height in this request, Council may choose to provide direction regarding whether a General Plan amendment to include residential uses at Triangle Square could include building heights that exceed 4 stories.

Finally, the City approved a mixed-use development project composed of 113,800 square feet of retail, a 150-room hotel, and 150 apartments in 1986. The overall building height ranged from two to six stories. However, that project was never constructed. A subsequent developer revised the project and named it "Triangle Square", which was approved and constructed in the early 1990s

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

City Council may consider the following alternatives:

1. Accept the screening request. Although the request does not comply with the acceptance criteria, Council may acknowledge that the General Plan screening criteria are only guidelines and accept this application. Furthermore, Council may provide direction as to:
 - a. Maximum building height: Should the project be allowed to exceed four stories?
 - b. Traffic generation: Should the project be "trip neutral" or only generate additional traffic that does not create a significant impact on the City's circulation system?
2. Deny the screening request. Denial of the request would maintain Triangle Square's existing land use designation, corresponding land use regulations, and entitlement.

FISCAL REVIEW:

Fiscal review is not required for this item.

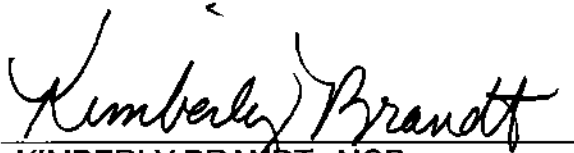
LEGAL REVIEW:

Legal review is not required for this item.

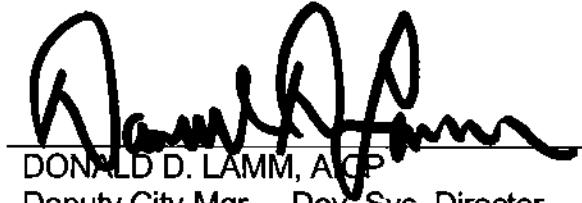
CONCLUSION:

The applicant seeks direction as to whether City Council supports the incorporation of residential units into the Triangle Square development. Furthermore, you may provide direction as to the maximum building height (i.e., is it acceptable to exceed four stories) and whether the project should be "trip neutral" or only generate additional traffic that does not create a significant impact on the City's circulation system.

Should you accept this request to process a General Plan amendment, it does not set a precedent for you to approve it at a later date. At such time the General Plan amendment is brought to Council for review and action, it will be accompanied by the appropriate environmental documentation, staff analyses, Planning Commission recommendations, and any public comments received on the project to date so that you can determine the project's merits and take action.



KIMBERLY BRANDT, AICP
Principal Planner



DONALD D. LAMM, AICP
Deputy City-Mgr. – Dev. Svs. Director

ATTACHMENTS: 1 Vicinity Map
 2 Site Photographs
 3 Applicant's letter

DISTRIBUTION: City Manager
 Assistant City Manager
 City Attorney
 Deputy City Manager – Dev. Svs. Dir.
 Public Services Director
 City Clerk (2)
 Staff (4)
 File (2)

Triangle Square Investments, LLC
1443 East Washington Boulevard, Suite 819
Pasadena, CA 91104

Patrick B. Strader
Starpointe Ventures
19700 Fairchild, Suite 240
Irvine, CA 92612

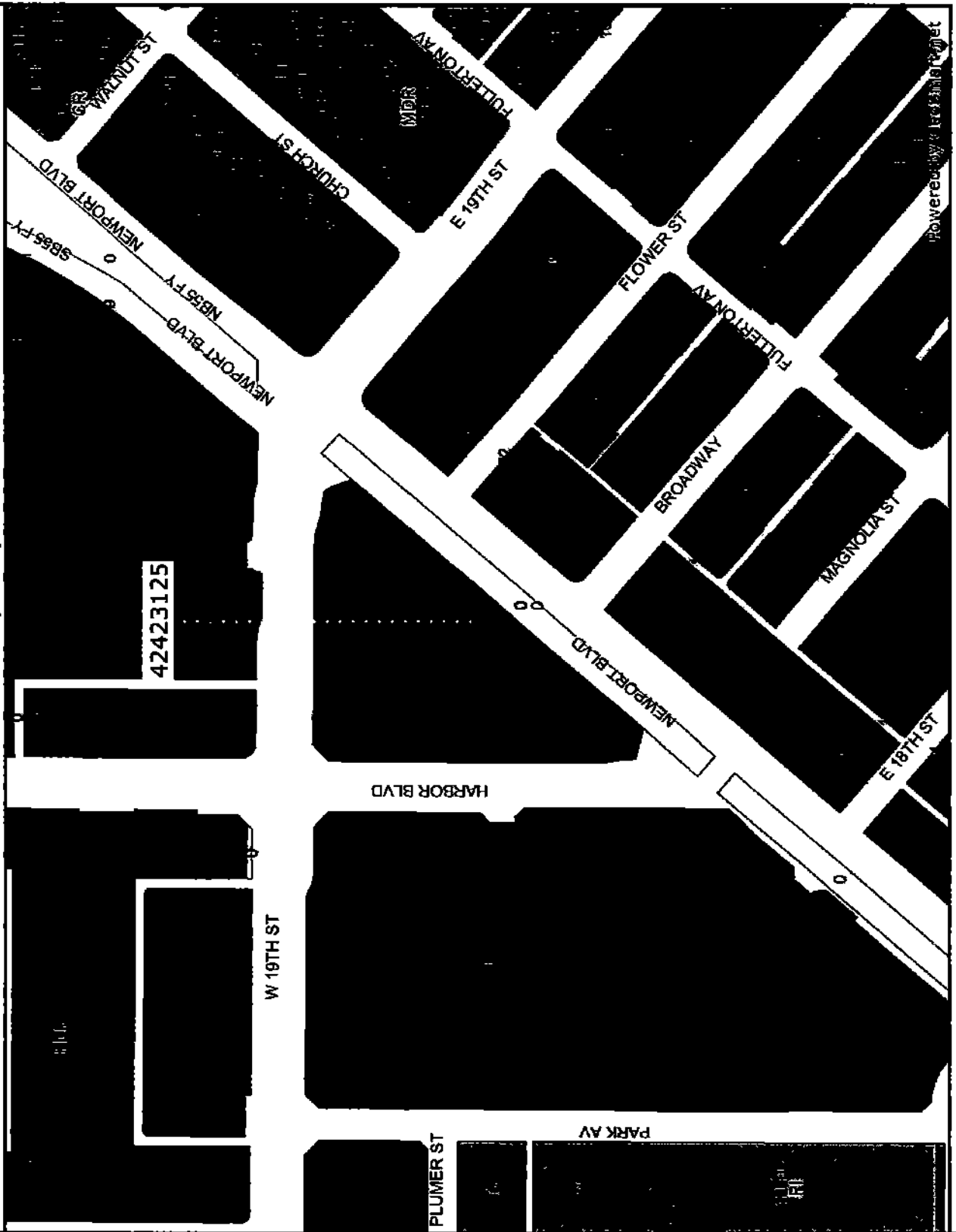
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Date: 062006

Time: 4:30 p.m.

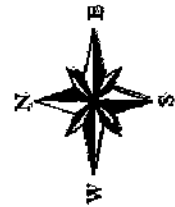
TRIANGLE SQUARE

Vicinity Map



Legend

- ☒ Selected Features
- ☐ Parcel Addresses
- Street Names
- Parcel Lines
- City Boundary
- General Plan
- Other
- Cultural Arts Center
- Commercial Center
- Commercial
- Residential
- Parkgrounds
- Golf Course
- General
- Commercial
- High Density
- Residential
- Industrial Park
- Low Density
- Residential
- Light Industrial
- Medium Density
- Residential
- Neighborhood
- Commercial
- Public/Institutional
- Regional Commercial
- Urban Center
- Commercial
- Parcels



Triangle Square Site Photographs

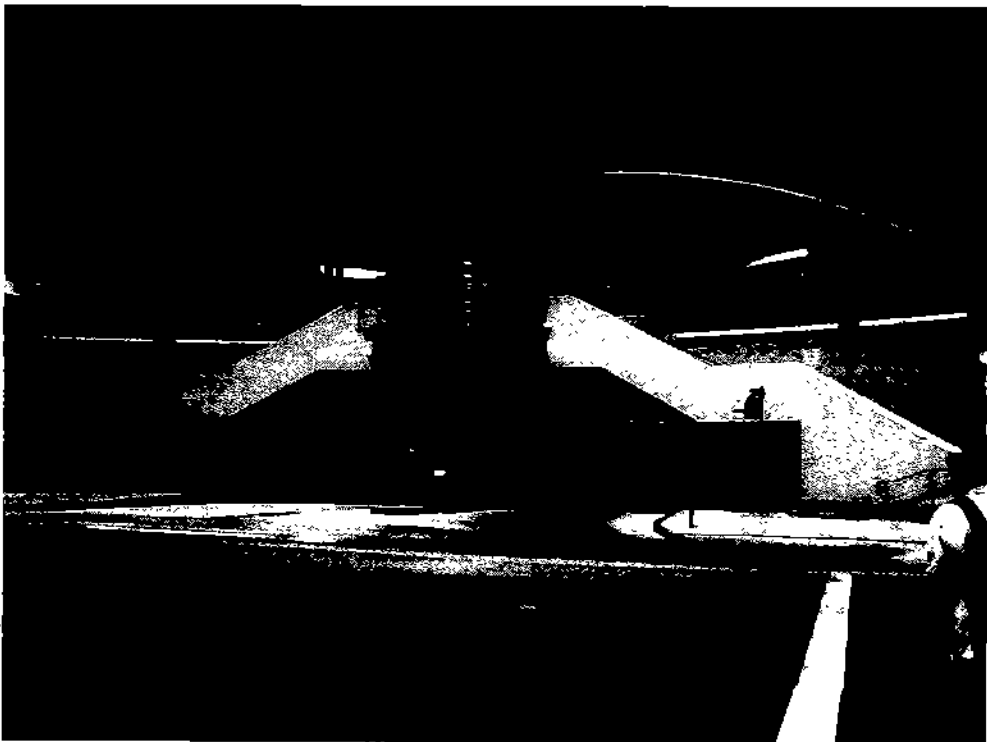
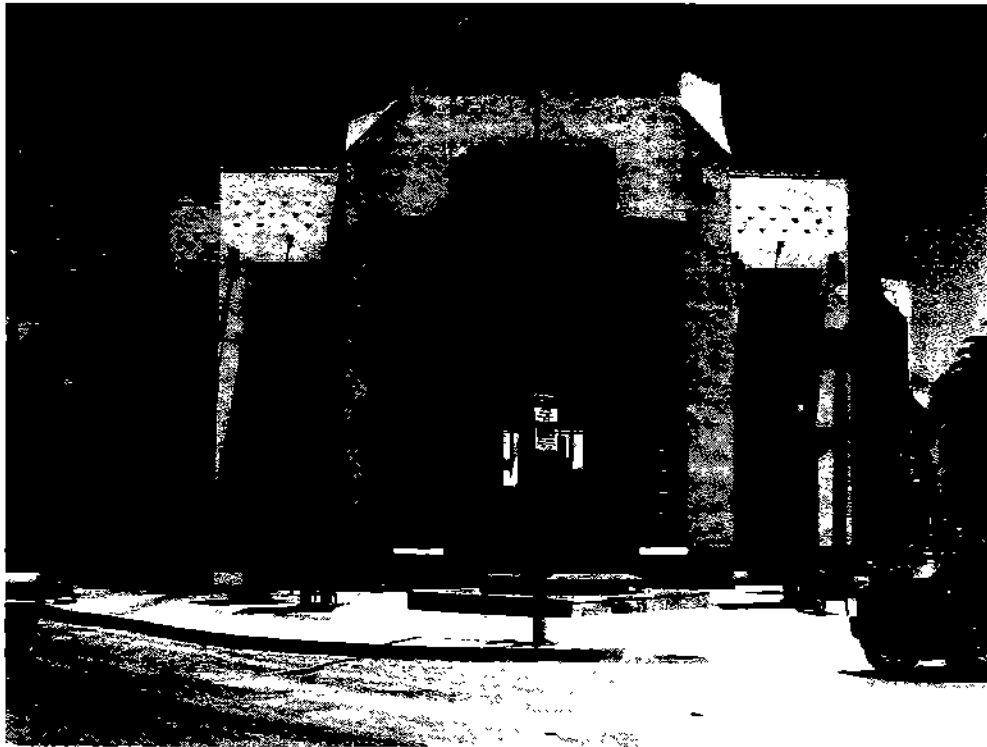


FIGURE 2A

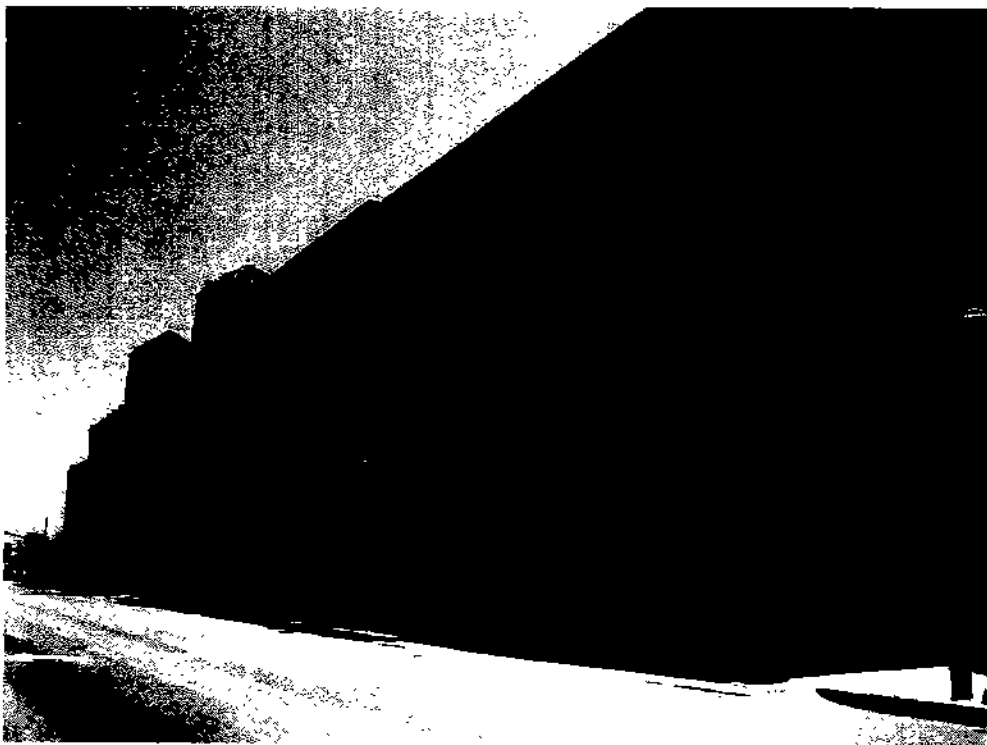
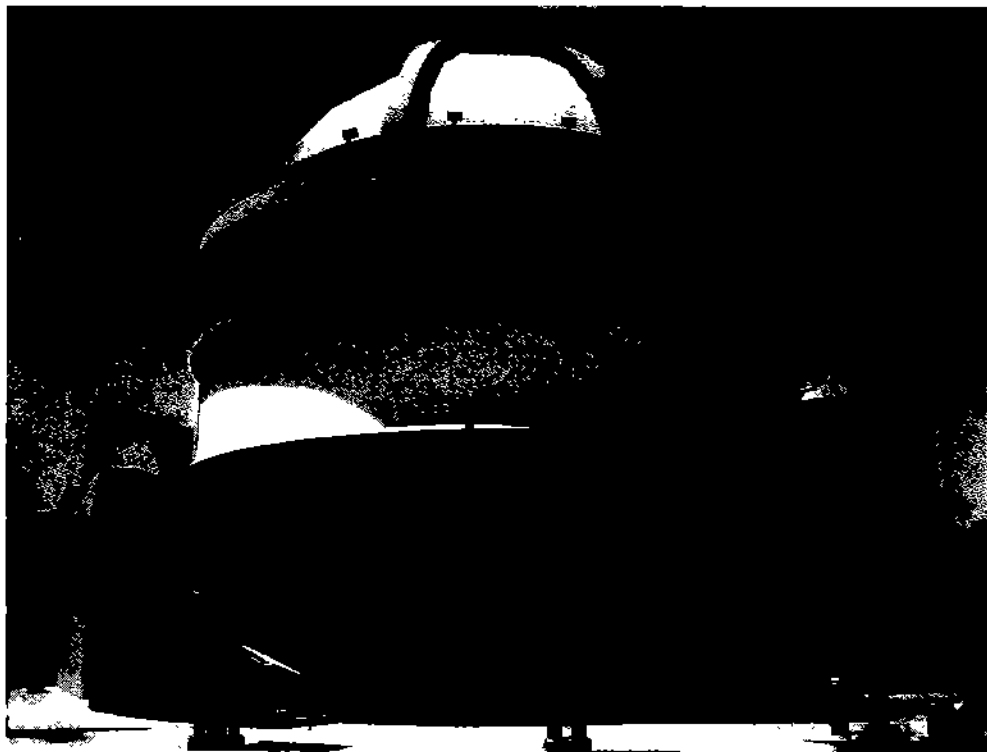


FIGURE 2B

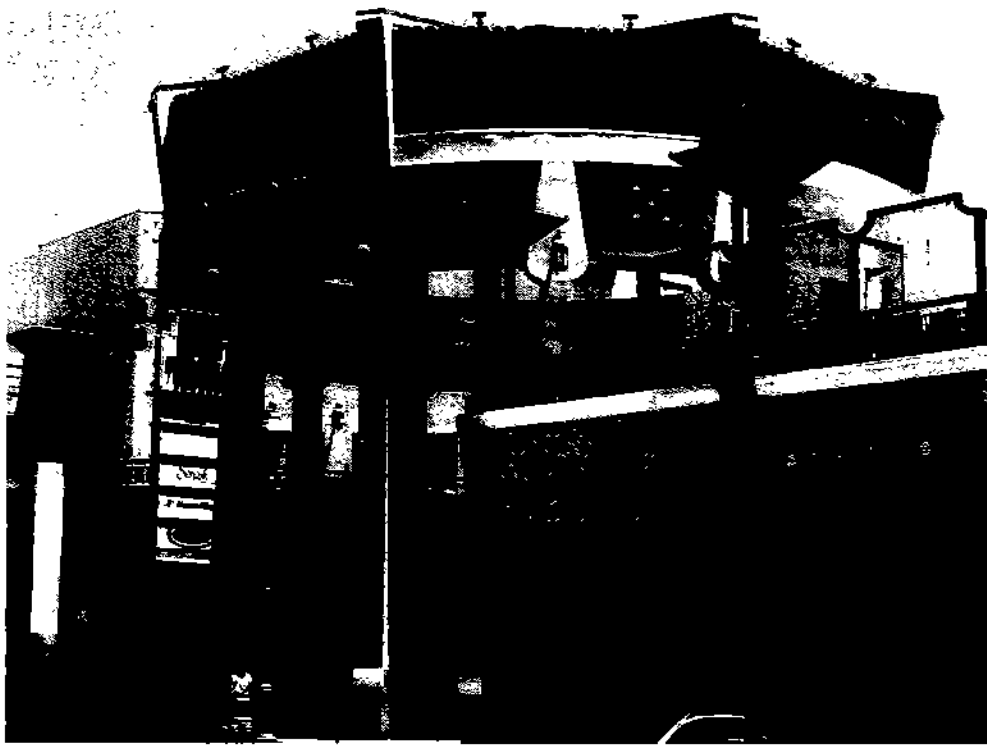
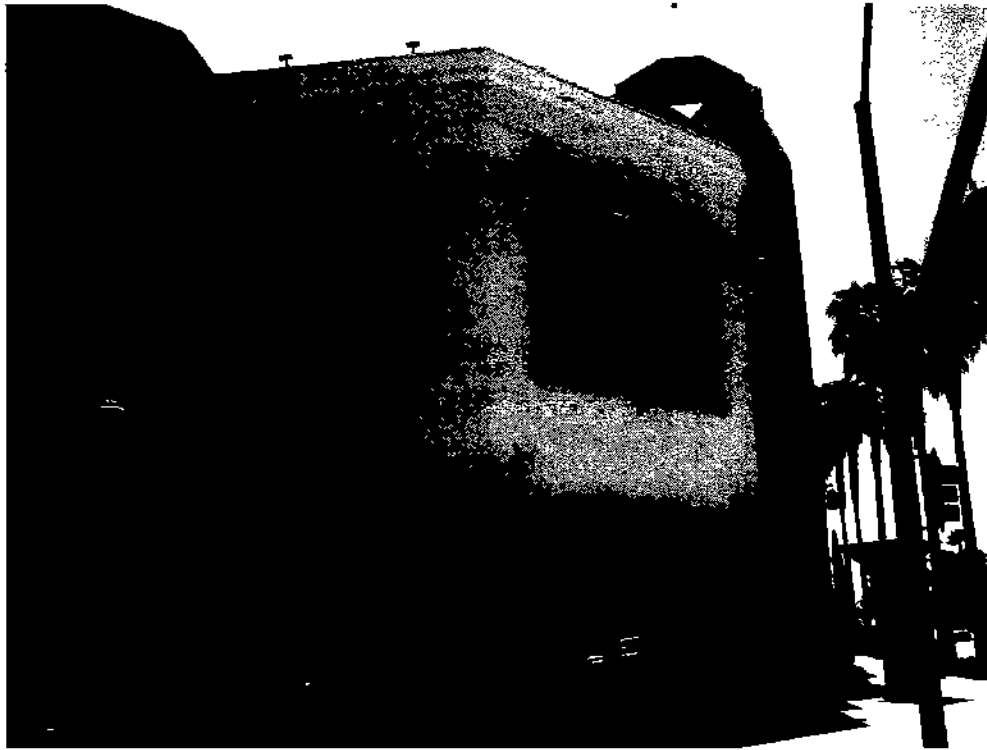


FIGURE 2C



FIGURE 2D



FIGURE 2E

June 9, 2006

Mr. Allan Roeder
City Manager
City of Costa Mesa
77 Fair Drive
PO Box 1200
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-1200

Re: General Plan Amendment Screen Application for Triangle Square

Dear Allan:

Please find a Planning Application for the above-referenced project attached hereto. We represent an investor who has entered into an agreement to purchase the property commonly known as Triangle Square within the City of Costa Mesa.

Our client wishes to reduce the overall retail square footage and introduce multi-family residential units into the existing 190,000 square feet of retail, dining, and entertainment uses along with supporting parking. We understand this residential mixed-use program was contemplated in the original approval, but was not constructed. Prior to completing acquisition of the property, our client wishes to confirm that a mixed-use project including multi-family residential units would be supported by the City of Costa Mesa.

In support of this application, we have included the following items:

1. Planning Application (with Owner Signature to follow)
2. Check for \$900.00 for the General Plan Screening Fee
3. Two copies of the Legal Description
4. Photographs of the Site

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June 9, 2006

We hope that this matter may be heard by the Council at the July 5, 2006 City Council meeting. We will be present along with our client at that time. Please contact us if additional information is necessary.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Patrick B. Strader". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Patrick" being the most prominent.

Patrick B. Strader, Esq.
Vice President
Starpointe Ventures

Enclosure (1)

cc: Donald Lamm, Deputy City Manager
Kimberly Brandt, Principal Planner